Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
Child Care Data Tracker Clarifications

Technical Bulletin #13r-v3
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I.   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Technical Bulletin is to address questions related to using the *Child Care Data Tracker* (*Tracker*) software.

The *Tracker* is a Microsoft Access-based case management tool developed by the Office of Child Care (OCC) to help CCDF Tribal and Territory Grantees keep track of information about the families and children they serve, and the services they provide. The software also automatically generates required program data reports – the ACF-700 for the Tribes and the ACF-801 for the Territories. Information about CCDF Tribal reporting requirements are detailed in the [Tribal Annual Report: Guide for CCDF Tribal Lead Agencies](#).

Information about State and Territory CCDF reporting requirements are detailed in the most recent version of *Technical Bulletin #3: ACF-801 Case-Level Data Standards*. The latest version of each of the [Technical Bulletins](#) are available on the OCC website.

The *Tracker Version 1.0* software was first distributed in 2001 to all CCDF Tribal Grantees. Since the original version of the software was released, several updated versions of the *Tracker* have been distributed. Their accompanying [Supplemental Guides and the Territory Addenda](#) are available on the OCC site. In December 2008, Version 2.0c of the software was distributed. Please contact the National Center on Child Care Data and Reporting (NCDR) if you do not have the latest version of the software. ***Unless otherwise noted, all references to the User's Guide in this bulletin are for the User's Guide labeled for V2.0. Guidance in this manual can also be used for V2.0a, V2.0b, and V2.0c of the Tracker software.***

The questions in this Bulletin are ones for which Grantees have frequently sought assistance from NCDR. The Bulletin focuses on situations that may or may not be addressed specifically in the *Tracker User's Guide,* and provides tips to support data entry and to ensure accuracy of the data that are ultimately submitted to OCC.

The information in Section II of this Bulletin is grouped into the following four categories:

- General Information
- Entering Data
- Generating Reports
- Administrative Documents

Section III of the Bulletin describes how to obtain additional information and assistance.

II.   QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

<u>**General Information:**</u>

1. We have never used the Tracker before and we realize that there have been several updates to the software. Which version of the Tracker should we start with?

Grantees who have not used previous versions of the Tracker should install the most recent version. At the time of publication of this bulletin, the most recent version of the Tracker was V2.0c – developed and disseminated by OCC in December 2008. Check the OCC website to be sure that no additional versions of the software have been distributed since that date.

2. My tribe is currently using a previous version of the Tracker (V1.0, V2.0a, or V2.0b) and would like to start using the most current version. What steps should I take?

As part of the standard installation process, Grantees have the option of directly transferring data from V2.0a or V2.0b to the most recent version of the Tracker (V2.0c at the time of this publication). During the initial installation setup, be sure to choose the option that allows you to transfer your existing database to the current version and be able to continue routine data entry without having to re-enter existing, historical data. (See User's Guide, pp. 21 -33.)

*If you still are using V1.0 you will **<u>not</u>** be able to transfer your information to the newest version of the Tracker. You may wish to print out the family and provider records to preserve this old information. You should also make and save a backup copy of the V1.0 database on your computer, being sure to name it clearly and save it in a location where you can access it as needed. Then, install the new version of the Tracker you wish to use. This new version will have an empty database containing none of your historic information and you can begin entering new information. If some of the families and providers included in V1.0 are still active, you can use the printed records to help you complete data entry.*

NOTE: If you keep both versions of the Tracker on your computer, be sure to name the old database in such a way as to clearly distinguish it from the newer Tracker version into which you are now entering new information.

3. We have installed the Tracker on a new computer and we are having trouble using the Tracker. What do we have to do to ensure the Tracker is installed correctly and that we are able to use it?

It is possible that your new computer has a newer operating system (OS) and/or a newer version of Microsoft Access than on which the Tracker was tested. Version 2.0c of the Tracker was tested with Microsoft Vista OS and Microsoft Access 2007, the latest Microsoft versions at the time of the last Tracker release. Special instructions must be followed to ensure that your software will fully operate in

conjunction with these or later versions of Windows and Access. Pages 35-46 of the [Supplemental Guide, Version 2.0c](#) *contain instructions for use with these programs.*

Additional installation modifications may also be needed if you are using a newer Microsoft Office package such as Office 2013 and 2016. The Data Tracker runs only on the 32-bit version of Access. Newer versions of Microsoft Access may have both 32 and 64-bit installation options. Microsoft Office 2010, 2013, and 2016 packages automatically install the 32-bit version, unless otherwise selected during the beginning of the installation process. However, if you are using a 64-bit installed operating system, Microsoft Office will install both the 32 and 64-bit versions of Microsoft Office (Access) and save versions in both the Program Files (x86) folder (for 32-bit versions) and the Program Files folder (for 64-bit versions). If your computer installed both versions of Access, you must install the Data Tracker and run Access from the 32-bit compatible Program Files (x86) folder.

Potential Error Messages:

Some users may encounter error messages when they first install and try to use the Tracker software on a new computer. The first time a user runs the Tracker program, the user may receive an error message asking the user to "Enable Content." If you see this error, click the button to enable content.

A second possible error is a "missing file" error. If you receive an error message related to a "missing file," search the online Microsoft Support site for information on how to download the most current version of the missing file to your computer.

Another error message that some users might encounter is, "There was an error compiling this function." This error is related to the 32-bit vs. 64-bit Windows operating system issue, as detailed above. Please make sure you have installed and are running both Access and the Data Tracker program from the appropriate 32-bit compatible folder on your computer. If you continue to receive this "compiling" error message, run Microsoft Access and click on "Blank desktop database" to open a blank new database file. If there are any issues with opening a blank database, then the error may be due to an Access installation issue or other Access configuration issue and not with the Tracker installation. If you cannot determine and diagnose the problem, please contact NCDR. (See contact information in Section III of this Bulletin.)

*(**Note: Always ensure that your database is backed up or available at a secure location before upgrading your computer**.)*

4. **We changed the default username and password for the Tracker but can't remember them. How can we regain access to the Tracker?**

    Contact NCDR for assistance. It may be possible to retrieve or reset your username and password. It is your responsibility to keep your username and password secure and to ensure that it will be appropriately available to staff members who are designated to use the Tracker. (See User's Guide, p. 72.)

5. **My program makes provider payments on a bi-weekly basis. I understand the Tracker does not accommodate bi-weekly payments. Is there some modification I can make in order to use the Tracker in my program?**

    The Tracker allows for monthly, semi-monthly (twice per month – on the 1st and 15th), and weekly payment information to be entered into the database. If your program makes provider payments on a bi-weekly (every two weeks – e.g. every other Friday), you can still use the Tracker. When you set up the Tracker, you should indicate that you make weekly payments. (This option is also available in the Application Maintenance module.) When you enter service authorization and payment authorization information into the Tracker, you will have to manually calculate the weekly amounts from your bi-weekly amount to enter in the Tracker (by dividing the amount in half).

Entering Data:

6. **I inadvertently entered a provider and family/child in the Tracker twice. Can I delete the duplicate records?**

    You cannot delete family, child, or provider records in the Tracker. You can however make the duplicate record "inactive."

    For families, close the duplicate family record by indicating a closure date and reason. Make sure to select "No" on each child's record in response to the question asking if the child receives a CCDF subsidy. Only children marked as receiving a CCDF subsidy will appear in the drop-down list when you set up new service authorizations. (See User's Guide, pp. 36-38.)

    You can make a provider inactive by selecting the "inactive" option from the "status information" drop down list on the Provider Information screen. (See User's Guide, pp. 31-33.)

7. **We establish eligibility for 12 months for an approved family. During the summer months the number of hours and payments may be higher for some children. How do I allow for higher hours and payments during the summer months?**

    The Tracker includes two types of authorizations: service authorizations and payment authorizations. When setting up service authorizations, think ahead and authorize the highest number of hours that you think the family might need during each service authorization (i.e., eligibility period). When you go to authorize payments, you can approve payments for the hours of service and the amount paid for the service up to the maximum that you authorized. You can always authorize payments for fewer hours and a lower payment than you initially approved in the service authorization. However, you <u>cannot</u> authorize payments for more hours or a higher payment than indicated in the service authorization. (See User's Guide, pp. 50-53.)

8. **We established eligibility for 12 months for an approved family. The family only used child care services for one month. How can I make sure that they are not counted as having used child care services for all 12 months?**

You should authorize payments for only the month(s) that the family received service. Do not authorize payments for the month(s) that the family did not receive service. The Tracker counts only those service periods that have an authorized payment date in the Payment Authorization module. If they leave the program, after you have authorized the payment(s) for received services, close the family record by indicating a closure date and reason for closure in the Client Information module. On the child record, indicate that "No" the child does not receive a subsidy. By indicating "No" in that field, the child(ren) no longer will appear in your drop-down lists when setting up future service authorizations.

9. **A family stopped using child care services, but then returned during the eligibility period that was originally established for them. How should I handle this family in the Tracker?**

For families who leave and return to the program during their previously established eligibility period, you should continue to use those existing eligibility periods/service authorizations. Authorize payments only for service periods during which the family actually received child care service. All other service periods will remain unauthorized in the Payment Authorization module.

10. **I accidentally put in the wrong dates for a family's eligibility period. Can I change the existing eligibility period for a family?**

You cannot change an existing eligibility period, but you can add new ones. It is important that you enter information into the Tracker sequentially (i.e., in the order events occur). When you establish an eligibility period, all of the service authorizations for children in this family must be created for that period before you establish another eligibility period. Once you have created a new eligibility period for a family, you will not be able to return to the previous period to set up those older service authorizations. The new period cannot duplicate or contain the same months of any eligibility period that has previously been created for that family. (See User's Guide, pp. 37-39.)

11. **What should I be aware of in terms of entering eligibility periods for families?**

Because you cannot change an eligibility period once it is saved, it is important that you enter the eligibility information carefully. Some common errors include entering a wrong date, failing to enter an older eligibility period before entering a new or current eligibility period, or failing to create all of the service authorizations for one eligibility period before setting up a new one. The following are tips to help prevent problems:

Enter information into the Tracker sequentially (from the past to the present), making sure to <u>*check for accuracy before you save the information*</u>*.*

- *A new eligibility period can never duplicate or overlap months of a current or prior eligibility period.*

- *When you establish one eligibility period, you should create all of the service authorizations for that period before you establish another eligibility period.*

We recommend that if you have questions related to eligibility periods, you contact NCDR for help with your specific situation prior to entering this information.

12. I just created a new one-year eligibility period for a family, and their eligibility period began today. I created a service authorization for the child(ren), but when I go to the Payment Authorization screen, I only see a payment line for the current month. Why can't I see the payment lines for the rest of the eligibility months?

In the Payment Authorization module, you can authorize payments for a service period that is current or past. You cannot authorize future payments for services that have not yet been provided. As a way of ensuring that future payments are not entered, the Tracker will only display payment lines for the present service period and past service periods. When your computer's current calendar date passes the last day of the present service period, a new payment line will automatically be displayed. To ensure that all payment records were created, you can see all associated payments by using the View Payments function in the Payment Authorization module.

13. One of our providers operates a family child care home. The provider's daughter and granddaughter live in her home with her and the eligible child receives child care services from her grandmother. What provider type should I indicate in the Tracker: "family home" or "child's home"? Should I add the provider a second time to reflect both types of care?

Unless a provider operates more than one program, he or she should only have one record in the Tracker indicating one type of care. Since this provider operates a family home, the child should be reported under "family home" provider type. When setting up the service authorization for a child in this circumstance, you should select the appropriate provider and the option which indicates that the care is being provided by a relative. (See User's Guide, pp. 45-46.)

14. Our Tribal Government decided to change from a monthly payment schedule to a weekly schedule. Is it possible to change my payment schedule in the Tracker?

Yes, it is possible to change the payment schedule you originally designated in the Tracker. However, the new payment schedule will be effective only for new service authorizations. All current service authorizations and payments will have the payment schedule that was in effect when they were originally set up.

15. **Our Tribe authorizes and pays for child care services based on full-time or part-attendance. For example, a child needing 20 or fewer hours per week is authorized for part-time care, while a child needing more than 20 hours is authorized for full-time care. Does the *Tracker* allow for the tracking of hours and payments based on full or part-time attendance?**

Yes, you can authorize services and payments based on full or part-time services in the Tracker. When you establish the child's service authorization, indicate the number of hours equivalent to full or part-time care for the service period and the associated payment for the full or part-time care for the period.

Based on your example, you would authorize 90 hours (multiply 20 hours times 4.5 weeks for the monthly service period) for part-time care and 180 hours (40 hours times 4.5 weeks) for full-time care. You would enter the appropriate payment associated with either part-time or full-time care. When you authorize payments for each service period, you can authorize the full hours and payment as established in the service authorization or modify hours and/or payment based on the child's attendance of full or part-time attendance during the service period.

16. **Why does the Tracker ask about Hispanic Ethnicity and different Races? Is this relevant for a Tribal Program?**

CCDF legislation requires that all children being served with CCDF funds in the Tribal programs be Native American/Alaskan Native, and OCC understands that Tribes will record every child in the Tracker as such. The additional choices are included in the Tracker to support the Territory programs that also can use the Tracker software and are required to report Race and Ethnicity for their monthly case-level ACF-801 Report.

17. **On the Client Information screen, I see "Other" in the "Reason for Subsidy" drop down box, yet the ACF-700 form does not have "other" as a response choice. Should we use "other" as an option?**

The Tracker was designed to be used by both Tribal Grantees (for the ACF-700) and Territories (for the ACF-801). Prior to changes in reporting guidelines for States and Territories, the ACF-801 report allowed for "other" to be reported. Tribal Grantees who use the Tracker should not select "other" as a reason for care. In future versions of the Tracker software, the "other" option will not be available to either Tribes or Territories.

18. **My program's sliding fee scale has different income ranges for different family sizes and early versions of the Tracker were not able to accommodate our scales. Are there any plans to update the Tracker software so that we can use it to calculate copays?**

Version 2.0c of the Tracker was modified to allow the user to enter separate income ranges and co-payment amounts for different family sizes. This feature is available

for each of the three co-pay calculation methods included in the Tracker. (See pages 19-28 of the [Supplemental Guide, Version 2.0c, December 2008](#).)

Generating Reports:

19. When I try to generate an ACF-700 report, I get an error message that says "The ACF-700 can not be generated until the Poverty Guidelines for FFY[Year] have been entered in the Application Maintenance Module." What does this error message mean?

There is a table located in the Application Maintenance module that stores annual Federal Poverty Guidelines. The current version of the Tracker may already include the Federal Poverty Guidelines for the year that the software was distributed. Subsequent Poverty Guidelines must be entered into the Tracker annually by the user. You will get the error message if you try to generate the ACF-700 report for a year for which you have not entered the poverty guidelines. The Federal Government usually releases the [Poverty Guidelines](#) by March of each year. (See User's Guide, p.72.)

20. I have entered all of my provider and family information and set up service authorizations. When I run the ACF-700 report or one of the profile reports, everything is either zero (0) or blank. Why is this happening?

It is likely you have not authorized payments in the Tracker. That is the final step in the process of entering data in the Tracker. The Tracker calculates the ACF-700 report based on authorized payments. To authorize payments, go to the Payment Authorization module and authorize all appropriate payments for the reporting period before generating your ACF-700 report. (See User's Guide, pp. 57-59.)

Administrative Documents:

21. I want to customize our certificates and letters, or possibly add our logo or letterhead to them. What options do I have?

You can customize approval letter text and certificate text through the Application Maintenance module. (See User's Guide, pp. 86-87.) After generating certificates, letters, or reports through the Administrative Documents module, you may have the ability to customize or enhance them further by exporting them as a PDF and then converting them to Microsoft Word. Once the document is open in Microsoft Word, you can make your desired changes prior to printing and/or saving them.

NOTE: Opening the report, letter, or certificate in Microsoft Word may affect the format of the document. Modifying the document this way requires that you customize each letter or certificate individually. Another option may be to copy/print the standard Tracker document onto your custom printed letterhead paper.

22. I would like to change or re-start my certificate numbers for a new fiscal year. How can I do this?

*In the Application Maintenance module, click the **Certificate Title Text** tab. Enter a new certificate start number in the Starting Control # field at the bottom of the screen. When you generate the next certificates, the first new certificate will have the number that you entered in the box. There will be one certificate for each child/provider combination within each family. For example, if a particular family has two children receiving services and both children have two providers, a total of four certificates will print for that one family. (See User's Guide, pp. 71-73.)*

III. WHERE TO GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

If you have other questions or need more information about the *Tracker* software and the ACF-700 report, your primary source for help is the National Center on Child Care Data and Reporting (NCDR).

The Office of Child Care (OCC) is represented by staff in each of the ten administrative regions across the country. You should contact your Regional Office if you have questions regarding your Child Care program policy or operations. Contact information for the **Regional Offices** can be found on the OCC website at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/regional-child-care-program-managers.

NCDR works with OCC to provide technical assistance to all of the Tribal, Territory, and State CCDF Grantees with matters related to the required CCDF data reporting. You can reach **NCDR** by:

Phone (toll-free):1-877-249-9117
E-mail: ncdr@ecetta.info
Fax: 301-816-8640
Mail: 2600 Tower Oaks Boulevard
     Suite 600
     Rockville, MD 20852